



# Kodiak Island Borough

Community Development Department

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State of Alaska, DOT/PF  
Division of Statewide Planning  
3132 Channel Drive, Room 200  
Juneau, Alaska 99801-7898

Attn: Eric Taylor, Project Manager

Re: Comments on the Draft Southwest Alaska Transportation Plan

Dear Mr. Taylor:

Thank you for the opportunity to review the Draft Southwest Alaska Transportation Plan. After review, the most substantial issue, from the perspective of the Kodiak Island Borough, is the comment on Page 8 of the draft, which indicates that the M/V Kennicott will not likely see a significant increase in availability for Southwest Alaska during the planning period (through 2020). Kodiak was, and is still, a strong supporter of the M/V *Kennicott*. Kodiak has supported the development of the M/V *Kennicott* from the earliest planning stages, particularly in its role as an ocean operation certified backup vessel to the M/V *Tustumena*.

The idea that Southwest Alaska will become more reliant on the M/V *Tustumena*, and may not be similarly more reliant on the *Kennicott*, as the best available backup vessel during times that the *Tustumena* is unavailable, is very troubling. In addition, the Southwest Alaska region, as well as AMHS might be better served if the M/V *Kennicott* provided a linkage from Southwest Alaska to Southeast Alaska and the Lower 48, as the only other AMHS owned and operated vessel that is certified for open ocean operation. This would be consistent with the AMHS mission statement and should be confirmed by AMHS, as indicated in the footnote on Page 8 of the draft plan.

The Kodiak Community is poised to support the proposed re-allocation of the M/V *Tustumena* to better serve Southwest Alaska coastal communities, when the new fast ferry service is established in Prince William Sound. While the draft plan for Southwest Alaska discusses the need to develop dock and shore side facilities in support of the additional stops in Kodiak, the plan stops short of suggesting Kodiak as a potential location for home porting the M/V *Tustumena* within the new service area. The City of Kodiak is currently reserving several acres of land on Near Island, across the channel from downtown Kodiak, in order to develop a new and expanded ferry dock and terminal facility. With the development of this facility, it would be an excellent opportunity to construct the needed infrastructure to support the home porting of the *Tustumena* in Kodiak. In addition, it would be a good opportunity to develop a single facility to support both the M/V *Tustumena* and the M/V *Kennicott*, when it is providing service to Kodiak and Southwest Alaska.

Kodiak is particularly well suited as a homeport for the *Tustumena* as it has adequate infrastructure to support the M/V *Tustumena* and the M/V *Kennicott*. Kodiak is located well within the Southwest Alaska service area as described in the draft plan. In addition, Kodiak is a substantial intermodal hub for the region with one of the largest airport facilities within the service area. The Kodiak State Airport supports Alaska Airlines passenger and cargo jet service to and from Anchorage on a daily basis as well as numerous connecting flights on smaller aircraft operated by ERA Aviation and other air taxi services. Kodiak also has substantial traffic in containerized freight shipping through CSX Lines, which can provide direct shipping to and from the Lower 48. This could provide cost-effective shipping options that are not presently available to the communities within the Southwest Alaska service area.

Additional comments on the Draft Southwest Alaska Transportation Plan are set forth below:

1. Page S-3; the last paragraph describing the Pacific Coast Marine Corridor, indicates that the corridor ties into the Alaska road/rail network through the port of Homer. There is no rail connection in Homer at the present time, and the nearest connections to the rail system appear to be in Seward, Anchorage, and Whittier.
2. Page 17; Table 4; Concept: Ferry Service; Purpose and Need Strategy; it would be appropriate to amend the strategy to say "Increase service in region and between regions" As indicated previously, the Kodiak community supports interconnectivity between regions, particularly Southeast Alaska and the Lower 48, that could be provided by the M/V *Kennicott*. The statement on Page 17 in the box does reference inter-regional connectivity, but this statement is not clearly reflected in Table 4.
3. Page 29; In the table for "Other intermodal projects identified.. ." it should be mentioned that there is currently a project in process to upgrade the small boat launch and parking facility in Antone Larsen Bay, which is connected to the Kodiak road system. The improvements created by this project will provide enhanced inter-modal transportation service, by small boats, to the communities of Port Lions, Ouzinkie and a number of individual fishing, recreational and residential developments on the west side of Kodiak Island.

Again, thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Draft Southwest Alaska Transportation Plan. If you have any questions about these comments please feel free to call me at (907) 486-9360.

Respectfully,



Duane Dvorak, Director  
Community Development Department

Cc: Patrick S. Carlson, Borough Manager  
Kodiak Island Borough Assembly  
Kodiak Island Borough Planning and Zoning Commission  
Bud Cassidy, Engineering and Facilities Director

